

# DOINGWHATWORKS



**Video**

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

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## A Family Approach

Marshall Elementary School, California • January 2010

**Topic:** Increased Learning Time: Beyond the Regular School Day  
**Practice:** Maximize Attendance

### Highlights

- Parent coordinator Ario Salazar helps parents become more engaged in their children's education.
- The after-school program has changed the face of the school community by building strong rapport with families and taking a whole-family approach. This has increased the level of parent participation and involvement.
- Staff at Marshall Elementary School's after-school program communicate successfully and frequently with parents, so they understand what their children are doing in the program and have the tools to understand that they are partners in their children's education.

### About the Site

**Marshall Elementary School**  
**San Francisco, CA**

### Demographics

78% Hispanic  
7% White

3% Black  
2% Asian  
90% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch  
65% English Language Learners

Marshall Elementary School's after-school program aims to promote students' academic skills and enrichment experiences by using the following strategies:

- A full-time lead teacher aligns planned program activities with the regular school day.
- After-school staff and a parent coordinator maintain regular communication with parents.
- The after-school program uses reading curricula aimed at helping English language learners.
- The after-school program director monitors students' progress and works to tailor the program to their needs.
- After-school teachers receive ongoing coaching and professional development.

## Full Transcript

My name is Ario Salazar. I am the Parent Partner Program director at Mission Graduates, and my work with the tutoring center at Marshall Elementary School deals with having parents be more engaged in school governance and be better advocates for their children.

The participation that we see in the after-school program is mainly due to the fact that the after-school program has changed the face of this community, in that it has made the school become more than a school, and it becomes sort of like a resource center and a community center where you know for a fact that if you voice your need or concern, somebody is listening and somebody will be able to do something about that need or that concern that you have. And so I think that the participation is definitely more meaningful as well because parents build that strong rapport with these after-school teachers.

Parent participation is increased when a school site, or in this case an after-school program, really promotes the idea that you are not only working with the student but you have a family approach. And I think that we have proven ourselves time and again in showing the parents that we really do care about their concerns and their needs, that we are not neglectful in any way. We have a mission and a vision. We want for all students from the Mission District to attend and finish college.

When I first started, there was not that much parent engagement here. That was in 2004. It pretty much took us five years of layering, honing this particular line of work within the program design of the tutoring center, because we realized that without the participation of the parent in a meaningful way, we were not going to go beyond providing just like, perhaps, like a mediocre type of program when we knew that we really needed to have higher expectations for both the families and the students. And if we didn't convey this clearly to the parents, then we were not going to be able to achieve what we have managed to achieve

in these five years.

I feel that parents want to participate, but sometimes feel intimidated. And I feel that it is also the job of the educator to open up the school and really take a look at how things are happening in the classroom, in the program, and what some of the main areas of mutual support are. And I think that once parents understand that, and you present to them the option that they can participate if they wish to do this, they will definitely take that step forward. That's our experience here. And also, I think that through this daily communication, parents understand that this is not child care, this is serious business, we are here helping their children succeed in the classroom on a daily basis. I think that this is the major thing that we have managed to do here at Marshall Elementary School through the tutoring center, which is basically giving parents the tools to understand that they are our partners.